



NEWS RELEASE

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USDA OBSERVES HOMEOWNERSHIP MONTH BY HELPING WEST VIRGINIA FAMILIES BUILD THEIR OWN HOMES

HEDGESVILLE, WV, June 12, 2006—Administrator of Housing and Community Facilities Programs Russell Davis today helped a group of future West Virginia homeowners build their own homes. The homes are being constructed near Hedgesville, through the USDA Rural Development funded Self-Help Housing Program.

Davis was joined in the National Homeownership Month activity by U.S. Representative Shelley Moore Capito, West Virginia Rural Development State Director Robert Steptoe, Rural Development employees, representatives of the (host) Telamon Corporation, National Council on Agricultural Life & Labor Research Fund, Inc. (NCALL), NeighborWorks Mid-Atlantic District and Community Works.

“Homeownership is the best way to achieve the American dream,” said Davis. “The Bush Administration is committed to ensuring that as many families as possible achieve that dream. I’m proud of these families as they work together to build their own homes and Rural Development is happy to help.” Davis attended the event in place of Agriculture Under Secretary for Rural Development Thomas Dorr.

So far this year USDA Rural Development, through various housing programs, has invested almost \$2 billion nationwide to help rural families build or buy their own homes. Under the Self-Help program, groups of up to 12 families, working together, build their own homes under the supervision of a USDA funded grantee. Construction usually takes about a year. The families are required to complete at least 65 percent of the work themselves and on completion their work becomes their “sweat equity.” No family can move into a home until all the homes are completed. In the 45 years since the Self-Help program began, more than \$2 billion has been invested to help 40,000 homeowners across the nation construct their own homes.

President Bush has issued a proclamation designating June as National Homeownership Month—a time to reflect on the important role homeownership plays in American society. For more information on USDA Rural Development’s homeownership programs go to <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rhs/> or call any Rural Development office. In West Virginia, call 1-800-295-8228.

USDA Rural Development's mission is to increase economic opportunity and improve the quality of life in rural communities. As a venture capital entity, Rural Development has invested over \$63 billion since the beginning of the Bush Administration to provide equity and technical assistance to finance and foster growth in homeownership, business development, and critical community and technology infrastructure. Over 1.1 million jobs have been created or saved through these investments. Further information on rural programs is available at a local USDA Rural Development office or by visiting USDA's web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>.

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